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ABSTRACT

Consistent with education reform efforts, the Jamaican Government invited The Commonwealth of Learning to participate in an on-site needs assessment survey. Previous examination results revealed a need to strengthen teaching and learning in English, mathematics, and science, as most primary school teachers required enhancement in both the content and pedagogy of these subjects. Specific tasks assigned included: (1) identification of training needs which would assist in accelerating the primary teacher upgrading program; and (2) recommendations for practical means whereby the upgrading program might be accelerated through distance education. Since the number of qualified trainers in the country is inadequate to meet the many and diverse needs of educational personnel, distance education is viewed as one means of coping with the problem. This report addresses the critical infrastructure needed for the efficient and effective use of distance teaching and learning, and it discusses the possibility of broadening the use of distance education in Jamaica, particularly with respect to the in-service training of teachers and administrators to improve effectiveness in classrooms and schools. Recommendations and 24 references complete the document. (LL)

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THE COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN JAMAICA

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

A report to the Ministry of Education of the Government of Jamaica prepared at the request of The Commonwealth of Learning

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by

JAMES W. GRIEG

Professor Emeritus,
University of Toronto

October 1989

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Consultant Report

4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Consultant wishes to record his sincere appreciation for the assistance given to him by the Hon. Carlyle Dunkley, Minister of Education and the Hon. Burchell Whiteman, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and their officials. Mr. Euclid King, Chief Education Officer, was particularly helpful in arranging appointments with Unit Heads and their staff members in the Ministry and with representatives of the University of the West Indies and with representatives of UNDP and UNESCO headquartered in Jamaica. The staff in Mr. King's office provided a variety of services without which the consultancy would not have been successful. Heads of Teachers Colleges and schools visited during the consultancy shared their perceptions and views about Jamaican education with frankness and eloquence. The Consultant is also indebted to The Commonwealth of Learning for the invitation to participate in its important mission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 1989 the Government of Jamaica invited The Commonwealth of Learning to participate in a needs assessment survey on site in concert with the Ministry of Education, the University of the West Indies and other relevant local persons. A two-week consultancy in Jamaica was arranged from September 10 to 23 under COL's consultancy services programme. The purpose of the consultancy was to identify specific training needs which would assist in accelerating the primary teacher upgrading programme launched by the Ministry of Education in 1987. The Consultant was also asked to recommend practical ways whereby the teacher upgrading programme might be advanced through distance teaching and learning. It was estimated that the upgrading programme was intended for some 7000 primary school teachers.

Although educational reform in Jamaica is aimed at improving all levels of the educational system, it is generally recognised that an education system must rest on a strong foundation. Attention has turned, therefore, to primary education and the central role of the primary teacher. If provided with the necessary training, tools, support and incentives, it is the primary teacher who can reverse falling literacy and numeracy levels and lead the country to a greater measure of social well-being and economic prosperity.

Examination results during the past decade indicate clearly the urgent need to strengthen teaching and learning in the critical subjects of English, mathematics, and science. Most, if not all, primary school teachers require enhancement in both the content and pedagogy of these key subjects in order to realise the objectives of the new primary curriculum and raise academic achievement levels. Also, all supervisory officers, school principals and classroom teachers must be skilled in the testing and evaluation of pupil achievement in order to implement successfully the National Assessment Programme. And, at the present time, teachers must be able to use diagnostic tests competently and take appropriate remedial measures to help those children who are chronic underachievers. Finally, the continuous professional development of every member of the educational team is the only way of ensuring that their performance in the schools and classrooms meets the highest possible standards of leadership and teaching.

It is reported that the number of qualified trainers in the country are inadequate to meet the many and diverse needs of the educational personnel. For this reason Jamaica is beginning to turn to distance education as one means of coping with the problem. The use of distance education to promote the professional development of teachers is supported by the Jamaica Teachers' Association which has already produced distance education materials for the primary teachers upgrading programme. The Ministry of Education has also initiated similar activities and intends to expand distance teaching and learning in its training programmes. It seems clear that distance education in many forms will join traditional modes of delivering in-service teacher training during the decade of the 1990's. Moreover, it is generally recognised that, without this dual approach, Jamaica will not be able to meet the training needs required to mount a successful and sustainable reform initiative in education.

The time is ripe for the employment of distance education on many fronts. The reopening of the Regional Education Offices with a broadened mandate, the possibility of a fully functioning Department of In-Service Education in the Ministry of Education to lead and coordinate activities, the proposed creation of Teachers Centres and the prospects of improved means of communication and transport between the MOE in Kingston, the Regional Education Offices, the Teachers Centres and the Schools, all of these together provide the critical infrastructure for the efficient and effective use of distance teaching and learning. An expanded role for the Teachers Colleges and the University of the West Indies through its UWIDITE facility would ensure the successful implementation of a many-sided strategy for the improvement of Jamaican education.

The Commonwealth of Learning could also have a useful role to play in this process. In addition to assisting the Ministry of Education acquire a variety of distance education materials, COL could also help in the management of the training component of the planned in-service programme for supervisory officers, principals, resource teachers and classroom teachers in the primary schools of Jamaica.

INTRODUCTION

1 Jamaica is a middle income country with a population of 2.3 million (1987) and a surface area of 7,000 sq. kilometers. It is one of some 32 small island states in the Commonwealth. In 1987-88 the per capita GNP was $960. (U.S.) and the average annual GNP growth rate was -1.3 percent.

2 Since achieving independent status in 1962, Jamaica has made major advances toward the development of a society in which equality and social justice are more than empty slogans. Progress, however, has not come without difficulty. From time to time the country has been buffeted by economic shocks of seismic proportion as well as by natural phenomena of devastating force. But Jamaicans are more than survivors. They are a talented, resourceful and resilient people and, though still beset by seemingly insurmountable problems, they will no doubt stay the course until Jamaica becomes the prosperous and pleasant land it is destined to be.

3 Education is greatly prized by the citizens of Jamaica. Successive Governments have supported the view that Jamaica's hopes for a better tomorrow lie in a sound education for young and old alike. The majority of teachers at all school levels perform their duties with remarkable devotion and diligence under conditions which would daunt the most dedicated professional. And ordinary parents make extraordinary sacrifices to obtain the best possible education for their children.

4 Surmounting enormous difficulties during the past three decades, Jamaica has made some notable achievements in education. The literacy level has been raised dramatically. Jamaica's reported literacy rate of 92 percent is one of the highest among countries with a comparable per capita income. School enrollment stands at 99% of primary age children. Access to secondary education of some sort is available to virtually every primary school graduate, and, by 1985 over 80% of primary school leavers were enrolled in some form of secondary education. Post-secondary education, too, has expanded beyond the traditional university-

type offering to include a wide range of applied fields of learning. Modern school facilities have been built throughout the country; curricula have been developed to meet the unique needs of Jamaican learners; and modern technology has been harnessed to overcome the limitation imposed by temporal and geographical constraints. Even though the present qualitative performance of the educational system is less than desirable, this disappointment should not overshadow past successes.

5 Dissatisfaction with achievement levels reached by graduates of the primary and secondary schools is not unique to Jamaican parents and educators. In developed and developing countries of the Commonwealth the view is widespread that there has been a deterioration in educational standards over the past two decades. A return to the 'basics' is often given by critics of contemporary education as the remedy for this perceived decline. There are, of course, many factors which have contributed to the present 'crisis' in education. One of these factors is the unresolved debate among professional educators and policy-makers whether educational programmes should emphasise 'what is to be learned' or 'how it is to be learned'. The content versus process argument of the 1970's has, unfortunately, cast its shadow over schooling in the 1980's. The apparent lack of direction in contemporary education no doubt contributes to the perceived (and possibly real) deterioration in the performance of both teachers and learners.

6 Though there may be some consolation in the knowledge that declining standards are not unique to Jamaica, Jamaican policy-makers, educators and parents are justifiably concerned about the performance of their own schools and the achievement levels reached by the pupils. It is often reported that some 40% to 50% of primary school leavers lack the basic skills of reading, writing and computation. As a consequence, many students in New Secondary Schools cannot profit from the various programmes because of their inability to read and to express themselves. Even at the University level, inadequately mastered reading and writing skills hinder high school graduates from the full benefit of university level studies. The poor CXC/GCE results, particularly in English, mathematics and the sciences, over the past several years suggest that even the 'best and brightest' of Jamaican students are being disadvantaged

by an inadequate teaching and learning environment. It is clear that further erosion of educational standards must be halted and the situation reversed during the 1990's. The clock is ticking and bold, decisive and imaginative measures must now be taken to bring about substantive and sustainable reforms in education.

7 During the 1980's the service sectors of the economy, including Education, lost ground in Government funding support to the so-called productive sectors. Government expenditure on education was reduced from about 7 percent of GDP in 1982-83 to about 4 percent in 1985-86. The Ministry of Education's capital budget was drastically reduced in an effort to minimise cuts to the operating budget. Although the present Government is trying to recover the lost ground, by making education a leading priority, for the foreseeable future the Education Sector cannot expect to receive all the financial support it will require to bring about a massive and enduring upgrading of all aspects of the school system. Systemic improvement, therefore, will require the prudent management of resources, and, wherever possible, alternative and cost-effective ways of delivering quality educational services.

8 Distance education is one such alternative to which Jamaican educators are now turning. The application of distance education techniques to the delivery of educational services has, elsewhere in the Commonwealth, resulted in economies of scale, consistency of quality, rapidity of execution and effective division of labour. Distance methods, when properly understood and implemented, can multiply the impact of the best teachers, expand learning opportunities, widen the range of courses and overcome the constraints of space and time which often diminish the outcomes of education while, at the same time, increasing the cost.

9 This report is about the possibility of broadening the use of distance education in Jamaica, particularly with respect to the in-service training of teachers and administrators to improve their effectiveness in classrooms and schools. The Mission concurs with the view that "No programme for the improvement of the system of education or indeed for national development can truly be effective unless the central place of the teacher in the life of the nation is recognised and supported" (King, 1989).

10 The Commonwealth of Learning has been established to assist Governments, their agencies and institutions, in their efforts to develop the human resources required for social and economic progress. We hope that this report will encourage the Government of Jamaica to seize the opportunity which distance education offers in helping to improve the quality of Jamaican education.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

11 In May 1989 Dr. J.A. Maraj, President of The Commonwealth of Learning, and Dr. D. Irvine, Director of Caribbean Programmes, held consultations in Kingston, Jamaica with the Hon. Carlyle Dunkley, Minister of Education and the Hon. Burchell Whiteman, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and their officials. The purpose of the consultations was to brief the Government of Jamaica on the progress to date of The Commonwealth of Learning and to explore ways in which The Commonwealth of Learning might help the Government of Jamaica in tackling the overriding problems of human resources development.

12 These consultations revealed that Jamaica was embarking on a comprehensive programme of educational reform with the highest priority being accorded to improving the quality of primary education. The major problem in this regard was identified as the quality of teaching in the primary schools. It was noted that some 7000 primary school teachers were in need of additional training in the critical fields of English, mathematics and science. Further training was also required to improve the instructional leadership skills of education supervisors and for most of the 800 or so school principals.

13 Various types of COL assistance in support of the Government's efforts to improve the quality of primary education were considered in a preliminary fashion. The range of possible assistance activities included the following:

(a) accession of materials and screening for suitability and appropriateness, the final selection to be made by the Ministry of Education;

(b) workshops for coordinators of the three programmes appointed by the Ministry;

(c) training of selected persons to undertake the necessary face to face tutorials to back up the distance teaching mode;

(d) pilot testing of the programmes for a sample of schools, including end of course assessment;

(e) evaluation of the project;

(f) implementation of the programmes in the scale required; and

(g) comparison research, in the case of teacher training in particular, on learning problems in the subject areas concerned and the comparative performance of distance teaching with the conventional approaches.

It was agreed that, pursuant to the initial consultations, further exploration would be required to consider how best to deliver such a multi-faceted assistance package.

14 The Government of Jamaica responded in June 1989 proposing that The Commonwealth of Learning participate in a needs assessment survey on site in concert with the Ministry of Education, the University of the West Indies and other relevant local personnel. As a result Dr. James W. Greig, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, was invited by The Commonwealth of Learning to undertake a two-week consultancy in Jamaica in September 1989 to assist in the needs assessment survey. The specific tasks assigned to the Consultant under the Terms of Reference included:

(a) identify specific types of training needs which would assist in accelerating the primary teacher upgrading programme in Jamaica; and

(b) recommend practical means whereby the upgrading programme might be accelerated through distance education.

The consultancy was conducted from September 10 to 23 in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Jamaica.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN JAMAICA

15 A number of recent reports on the educational system in Jamaica have analysed its deficiencies and made recommendations for its improvement. The Report on the Development of Secondary Education in Jamaica (UNESCO, 1983), the Report on Teacher Education in Jamaica (UNESCO, 1985) and the Staff Appraisal Report on The Social Sectors Development Project (WORLD BANK, 1989) document the range of problems which prevent the educational system from functioning with greater effectiveness and efficiency. It is not the purpose of this present report to add to the details of those earlier studies as the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in them are generally recognised as valid by the Government and the professional educators in Jamaica. There is, moreover, a strong commitment on the part of the present Government to redress the deficiencies as quickly as possible and thus move the educational system to a higher level of performance and productivity. There is also a feeling of qualified optimism among Jamaican educators that educational reform can be accomplished in the decade ahead.

16 This report focuses on primary teachers and on ways and means of furthering their professional development. Primary education is provided in primary and in all-age schools. In 1986-87, the latest years for which statistics are available, the number of teachers in primary schools was 4,000 and in all-age schools approximately 5,500. Of these 9,500 primary teachers only 500 were untrained in 1986-87. Unfortunately, trained teachers are reported to be leaving the profession at an annual rate of 18% - 20% and in some high schools the rate is as high as 30%.

The loss of trained teachers is exacerbated by the continuing decline in the output from the teacher training institutions which are only producing some two-thirds of the number of teachers required annually. It seems evident that further efforts to improve the quality of the teaching service will be self-defeating if teachers trained to superior levels of qualifications continue to leave the teaching profession for better paying jobs in the private sector.

Post-Certificate Programme (1987-)

17 One of the major improvements in the initial training of teachers was the return in 1981 to the 3-year intramural programme, the first diplomates of which were produced in July 1984. The next major effort to improve the qualifications of primary teachers was the launching of the Post-Certificate Programme in 1987. Since January 1987 the qualifications of approximately 1,700 primary teachers have been upgraded from the certificate to the diploma level through an additional year of intramural training. (This number does not include the 705 teachers processed directly by the Teachers Colleges before the Joint Board of Teacher Education began its co-ordinating role.) Further, 'certificate' teachers who are inadmissible to the Post-Certificate Programme for academic reasons may enrol in the Preliminary Year Programme of combined academic and professional studies to qualify for admission.

18 Under this primary teacher upgrading programme the total registration at July 1989 for admission to the Post-Certificate Programme is reported to be 8,315 or two-thirds of all teachers for whom the programme is intended.

19 In order to implement the Post-Certificate Programme the Tertiary Unit of the Ministry of Education has developed five delivery options, viz.,

(a) The **CHALLENGE** option allows qualified candidates to obtain a diploma by sitting and passing the prescribed examination without course attendance. The number of "Challenge" candidates in the June-July, 1989, examinations was 15, a 100 percent increase over the number in February, 1989. Some primary-trained teachers working at the secondary school level are trying to qualify for secondary upgrading through this option.

(b) The **FULL-TIME** option is one-year of intramural studies for 'certificate' holders who have a minimum of 4 'O' level courses. Some 600 primary teachers attended the intramural programme in 1988-89.

(c) The **PART-TIME** option spreads the Post-Certificate Programme over approximately two years through evening studies. Some 800 teachers have chosen this option.

(d) The **VACATION** option offers courses in the summer, Christmas and Easter vacations.

(e) The **DISTANCE EDUCATION** option offers courses chiefly by correspondence.

It is the intention of the GOJ to accelerate the completion of the Post-Certificate Programme by expanding the **DISTANCE EDUCATION** option.

20 The Distance Education option is of particular interest to The Commonwealth of Learning inasmuch as COL has expressed a desire to support the National Teacher Upgrading Programme through strengthening distance education techniques in Jamaica. This option is also strongly supported by the Jamaica Teachers Association which has developed distance education packages for primary teachers in Language Arts and Education which, once approved by the Joint Board of Teacher Education, will be offered as part of the distance education option beginning October, 1989. Approximately 300 teachers are expected to benefit initially from this expanded opportunity. Distance education packages in mathematics, general science, social studies, music, physical education and art and crafts are now under preparation by staff members of the Teachers Colleges under the direction of the Tertiary Unit of the Ministry of Education. These new distance education packages are expected to be in use beginning January 1990.

21 To assist the Ministry in the coordination and delivery of the distance education component of the Post-Certificate Programme, provision has been made for an additional instructor to be assigned to each of the eight (8) Teachers Colleges from September 1989. In the beginning, at least, these instructors will have no training in distance education techniques, but will be university graduates including some with post-graduate degrees. There is, however, a training

component in distance education in the Human Resources Development Programme (World Bank Education Project IV, 1989) for the teacher college instructors and others. It is anticipated that this training component will be implemented in 1990-91.

22 The Post-Certificate Programme (full-year option 1988-89) was rated as fairly successful to successful in an evaluation conducted by the Tertiary Unit. Even though the sample was relatively small (150 respondents from 3 teachers colleges), the findings are of interest. According to the respondents there were a number of inadequacies.

(1) The course in Mathematics was difficult with the result that a significant number of candidates had to repeat the examination at a later date. (A large number of 'referrals' in any subject field create administrative problems, increase programme costs and delay salary increases for the teachers concerned.) Moreover, the mathematics course was insufficiently related to the mathematics taught in the primary schools and content and methodology were often taught separately, rather than together.

(2) It would appear that primary school principals and vice-principals took the same courses as classroom teachers without regard for their school status and experience.

(3) The courses in the management of children, testing and curriculum planning were reported as often inadequate in content and presentation.

(4) The post-certificate students compare favourably with the younger third year students but often participated only marginally in college life.

(5) Those primary teachers who are teaching in secondary schools were obliged to take the primary level upgrading programme because of their limited academic qualifications even though a majority of them would be returning to teaching assignments at the secondary school level. (In the Five Year Development Plan under preparation there is a recommendation in the Education Section that primary teachers who wish to qualify for admission to the secondary school teacher upgrading programme may improve their academic qualifications through summer courses.)

Primary Education Improvement Programme (1984-90)

23 Since 1981 there has been one other major initiative to extend the skills of supervisory officers, school principals and classroom teachers. This effort was aimed at providing support to the implementation of the new primary school curriculum of 1982. The Primary Education Improvement Programme (1984-90), a GOJ/IDB project, provided for:

(1) 14 libraries to be established as Resource Centres for the continuing in-service training of teachers serving some 270 schools; and

(2) an in-service training programme for 40 education officers, 1520 principals and vice-principals and 2100 classroom teachers. In this IDB project there were other physical facilities and equipment components as well.

24 The in-service training programme was conducted at Moneague Teachers College in 30 and 40 day blocks of time. Although the objective of providing further training for the education officers and school principals (and vice-principals) was achieved, only some 300 of the 2100 proposed teachers participated in the training programme. Two reasons are given for this large shortfall. After Hurricane Gilbert in September 1988 some projects funds were diverted to school repair and rebuilding. Also, there was a shortage of qualified personnel to provide training on such a large scale. There is, however, a possibility that a similar project funded by IDB might be mounted to complete the objectives of the 1984 initiative.

25 It seems clear that the utilisation of distance teaching and learning would help overcome the shortage of personnel to carry out large in-service training schemes with less disruption to schools and classrooms and quite possibly, at reduced cost.

Human Resources Development Programme (1989-94)

26 The Human Resources Development Programme (HRDP) is a comprehensive initiative of the Government of Jamaica to improve several important social services including education. The HRDP proposes to increase the flow of funds to the social sectors (which have been underfunded in recent years because of economic austerity) in order to support major

institutional and policy reforms. Under the HRDP a number of important educational reforms will be supported including, inter alia, institutional strengthening through establishing and staffing Regional Education Offices, the operation of the National Assessment Programme, in-service training of teachers, a pilot programme of award schools, and the development of teacher centres. Each of these proposed developments argues for an expanded role for distance education in the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of educational services in Jamaica.

1. The National Assessment Programme (NAP)

27 It has been generally recognised for some time that the Common Entrance Examination (11+) system is dysfunctional and hinders, rather than advances the educational progress of Jamaican school children. At the same time the benefits of a comprehensive and effective examination service are universally understood. In 1985 the GOJ established a National Assessment Programme (NAP) based on the new primary level curriculum. The NAP consists of a readiness test at Grade 1, a diagnostic test at Grade 3 and an achievement test at Grade 6.

28 To date the NAP, for a variety of reasons, has not generated data which are sufficiently complete and reliable to assess with confidence the impact of the educational system on the performance of school children. The data, however, tend to support the prevailing view that the quality of primary education has not as yet reached an adequate level.

29 Implementation of this programme is being hampered by a shortage of experienced and trained personnel in the Ministry of Education. It is generally recognised that the NAP tests must be professionally and reliably prepared and administered and the test results interpreted and disseminated in the same manner. To develop the NAP system further, the GOJ proposes to improve the quality of the NAP tests, their timeliness, their administration and the dissemination of their results. The development of the NAP tests has been accorded priority because it is planned that this achievement test will eventually replace the Common Entrance Examinations.

30 In this major educational reform effective school participation and support are critical. Toward this end it has been proposed that each school will nominate a member of its staff to serve as examinations' supervisor in a given year with a small honorarium to be paid to the supervisor. The examinations' supervisors will require additional training to ensure that the objective of improving the performance of the NAP is achieved. Moreover, as it is expected that the role of examinations' supervisor will rotate among the staff members of a school, every teacher must ultimately become knowledgeable and skilful in testing and measurement in the classroom. It was noted earlier (para 21.2) that teachers in the Post-Certificate Programme reported that courses in testing and measurement were inadequate in some respects. An effort should be made to ensure that in-service training courses are of good quality whether they are taught in the conventional mode or by distance education

2. Teacher Upgrading

31 Since 1976 there has been a steady and rapid increase in the number of trained teachers in the schools. It is reported that the percentage of trained teachers increased from 54% to 74% between 1976 and 1987. In primary and all-age schools the percentage increase was substantially higher. (In 1986-87, according to MOE statistics, only 120 of the 4000 teachers in primary schools and some 400 primary teachers of 5500 teachers in all-age schools were untrained). This remarkable accomplishment illustrates the potential of the system for self growth and change.

32 In spite of this improvement, however, a significant number of teachers in the primary and all-age schools still lack adequate academic qualifications. This lack seriously undermines the successful implementation of the new primary school curriculum and renders it virtually impossible to provide even a modified form of secondary education in the all-age schools. The competent teaching of English, mathematics and science by primary and all-age teachers is adversely affected as is the learning of these subjects by the students in the Teacher Training Colleges. Teachers cannot teach successfully what they themselves do not know or understand.

33 The HRDP will support short, intensive upgrading courses to be given during vacations or on weekends for about 2000 primary and all-age school teachers over the 1989-93 period. Although it would appear that the delivery of this critical upgrading programme is to be by conventional in-service training activities, distance education might be an attractive and cost-effective alternative.

3. Institutional Strengthening

34 The Report on the Development of Secondary Education (Unesco, 1983) recommended the creation of a local, decentralised school administration. The centralised system from Kingston, the Mission observed, seriously impeded the MOE's ability to respond quickly to the needs of the schools. The Study of School Administration (World Bank, 1989) also recommended the establishment of regional offices as decision-making centres for direct services presently offered by the Ministry's central office. Among the service activities recommended in the study is professional development for both teachers and school board members.

35 In an effort to improve the administration of the educational system, therefore, the Government of Jamaica has decided to re-open the regional offices which were closed in 1985 because of severe financial constraints. The system of regional education offices was originally set up to ensure that professional standards were being maintained in the country's schools. Closing the regional offices left many rural schools without the supervision and support required to deliver quality education. Under the Human Resources Development Programme the construction of 5 and the staffing of 6 Regional Education Offices are proposed. The project also provides for vehicles and communication equipment to facilitate reliable and continuous linkages between MOE headquarters in Kingston and the regional offices and between the regional offices and the schools.

36 Unlike the former regional offices, the new regional offices are to be given a greatly expanded mandate with widened professional and decision-making responsibilities. In order to implement successfully the staffing component of the project a substantial training programme will

be required for both incumbent and prospective supervisory officers. During the 1980's, posts for supervisory personnel in the Ministry of Education were frozen. The number of Education Officers in the curriculum unit and the field supervisory unit declined by 75%. At present some 50% of EO posts in the Ministry are vacant as it has become increasingly difficult to recruit experienced teachers to work in the Ministry of Education. Small salary differentials between MOE staff and teachers make it unattractive for experienced teachers (and particularly school principals) to become Education Officers.

37 Past as well a recent efforts to improve educational services in Jamaica have been constrained by the limited capability of the MOE to administer the system, to implement reform programmes and to monitor and evaluate performance in a systematic fashion. The decline in the MOE establishment in recent years has drastically increased the shortage of suitably-qualified personnel particularly in the areas of educational planning, supervision and evaluation. A recent survey of Units and Divisions in the MOE revealed that 64% of the professional staff were assessed as needing postgraduate training and 35% of the staff needed training in educational administration. The combination of inexperienced and untrained Education Officers in both the central and regional offices makes problematic the successful implementation of Jamaica's present education reform efforts. Under the HRDP some 20 of the professional officers who will be staffing the Regional Education Offices will receive training in the areas of planning, evaluation, monitoring and student assessment.

38 The objectives of the proposed decentralisation scheme of administration will not be achieved without the commitment and support of school principals (and vice-principals). In addition to further training of supervisory officers of the MOE there is a critical need for the further training of school principals. Of the many professional training needs of school personnel, training in curriculum implementation and the evaluation of teacher performance has been expressed as being the most urgent.

4. Teacher Centres

39 From time to time proposals have been made to establish Teacher Centres throughout the country. The Murray Report (1973) recommended that in-service training programmes be systematically organised at convenient centres throughout the island. The Report on Teacher Education in Jamaica (Unesco, 1985) recommended the establishment of four in-service teacher education resource centres appropriately located and with essential equipment, materials and facilities for in-service training of teachers and professionals in associated occupations. Irvine (1989) proposed the creation of teacher centres to serve as learning environments, to promote good teaching practices, to provide training on an ongoing basis, and to stimulate teachers through the exchange of information and experience.

40 Recently, the Tertiary Unit has proposed the establishment of a Department of In-service Education within the Ministry of Education. This new department would primarily be concerned with keeping apace with educational innovations and would aim at finding suitable solutions to educational problems identified in the school system. Two principal objectives of the department's work would be:

(1) to keep the teachers in the classroom as much as possible while updating knowledge and skills; and

(2) to provide a variety of strategies and develop materials including criterion referenced materials to facilitate educational development for teachers and principals

In order to achieve these objectives the Tertiary Unit, MOE, recommends the establishment of Teacher Centres in each parish to provide support for in-service training activities, the establishment of a management structure for each Teacher Centre and the implementation and coordination of distance education programmes in association with the Teacher Centres.

41 The staff of the proposed Department would consist of 14 field coordinators (one for each parish to man the Teacher Centres), 8 College Coordinators (to man the distance education programme at the training college level - personnel already approved by Public Service - see

para 20), resource teachers in all subject areas, 2 general coordinators, and programme producers to liaise with the Creative Production and Technical Centre (CPTC), and curriculum developers. All of these proposed staff members would require training in distance education techniques, and in particular, the Coordinator of In-service Education (Distance Education) whose stated responsibility is to coordinate the preparation of distance materials including correspondence, radio, television, audio-cassettes, video tapes, etc.

42 The implementation of this imaginative proposal would result in substantial benefits to the entire educational system and its clients. It would carry forward the intention to establish Resource Centres for in-service teacher training under the GOJ/IDB Primary School Project. It would also build upon the corps of resource teachers (already some 200 teachers) trained at Moneague Teachers college under the same project. It would institutionalise the role of senior teacher in the school as a post of special responsibility in relation to school-based professional development but with links to a training centre outside the school. This development would be in line with the Irvine proposal for the appointment of 'consultant' teacher(s) in each school.

43 It will, of course, be necessary to determine the roles and relationships among Regional Education Offices, Teacher Centres and distance education personnel working in the Teacher Training Colleges. Whatever model is finally determined, it should meet the criteria of 1) the widest possible access for teacher participation and 2) the least cost consistent with the delivery of quality in-service training.

DISTANCE EDUCATION RESOURCES IN JAMAICA

44 At present only one member of the MOE staff has received formal training in distance education methods. However, under the Education Programme Preparation and Student Loan Project (World Bank, 1989) support is provided for the expansion of distance education

in relation to the development of a comprehensive initiative in in-service training. Even though the objective of the project is aimed at the improvement and integration of Grades 7-9 of All-Age schools, the expansion of distance education to achieve that objective has implications for the whole educational system.

45 Under the project provision is made for the appointment of a consultant in educational technology for 9 months. The consultant will train at least 20 teacher educators and selected Ministry staff in the design, testing and production of integrated instructional packages for secondary teachers (Grades 7-9) utilising different media for distance teaching. The consultant is already under contract (September 1989). Four fellowships covering a period of 30 months of training are also provided so that Jamaican educators can work with the foreign specialist in designing the in-service training model and assist in the implementation and supervision of the new in-service training programme.

46 The University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) is another important distance education resource in Jamaica. Since March 1983 UWIDITE links the three campuses of UWI and the Extra Mural Centres in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent by telecommunications. The network is used for interactive distance teaching and other types of teleconferencing. One of the principal objectives of UWIDITE is to establish a core of experience and experienced workers to allow the efficient design, staffing and implementation of an operational system for distance teaching and outreach.

47 Some of the courses offered by UWIDITE are specifically related to teacher training and lead to Certificates in education with specialisations in the Hearing Impaired, Reading, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Studies and Education Management and Supervision.

48 Within Jamaica itself UWIDITE Mona is linked to sites in Mandeville, Montego Bay and Port Antonio by microwave. At present the courses offered at these local centres are for the upgrading of science teachers in the high schools. For the present there is no intention of expanding into other course offerings.

CONCLUSION

49 Educational reform is once again on the move in Jamaica on many important fronts. Recovery from the aftermath of Hurricane Gilbert is proceeding though the storm's devastating effects on both the economy and the school system persist. In spite of enormous problems there is at least qualified optimism that reforms are possible and sustainable if the political will and professional commitment are marshalled toward the accomplishment of clearly-defined goals and objectives. It is also generally recognised that an education system can be strong if its foundation is well laid. Attention has turned once again to primary education and the central role of the primary teacher. Measures are being considered to restore a sense of professional pride to the Jamaican teaching service which has served the country so well in the past. The need to ensure the material well-being of teachers along with tangible incentives to encourage professional growth and development are also matters of growing concern by both the Government and the teachers' representatives.

50 It was expressed on a number of occasions during this needs assessment survey that, in the future, there will be greater emphasis paid to the management of human and material resources, including the management of information. Educational managers at all levels of the educational system will be directed toward acquiring management skills to help in the reform effort. In the past inadequate project management has seriously diminished the full benefits of many worthwhile initiatives. The supervisory officers of the Ministry of Education, and particularly the school principals, are targeted as primary groups for intensive upgrading in the management of change.

51 Distance education is gaining a foothold in Jamaica as supplementary to conventional modes of delivering educational services. The Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA) strongly supports distance education as one approach to filling the immense training needs in education. The JTA was instrumental in encouraging the use of distance education as a means of accelerating the earliest possible completion of the Post-Certificate Programme and toward this end produced the first instructional packages. The MOE is also producing instructional packages

for the training of teachers by distance teaching and learning and is planning to expand the role of distance education to support the development and implementation of the proposed core secondary school curriculum (Grades 7-9). For a number of years the University of the West Indies has been involved in distance education through UWIDITE and, though no programme expansion is planned through the intra-Jamaica network, UWIDITE can play a useful role in the future.

52 The present needs assessment survey identified a number of training needs within the scope of the consultant's terms of reference. These include:

(1) upgrading the academic qualifications of those students seeking admission to the diploma programme in education through the Preliminary Year Programme (para 17)

(2) accelerating the completion of the Post-Certificate Programme through an expanded **DISTANCE EDUCATION OPTION** (para 20)

(3) developing a corps of distance educators including managers, producers, course developers, tutors and counsellors, trainers (para 21 and 44)

(4) providing specialised training for principals and vice-principals in the Post-Certificate Programme (para 22.2)

(5) upgrading the academic qualifications of primary trained teachers teaching in secondary and high schools to qualify them for admission to the secondary school option in the Post-Certificate Programme (para 22.5)

(6) providing specialised training to support the new primary curriculum with emphasis on methodology in mathematics, English (including reading) and science (para 24)

(7) providing specialised training in test preparation, administration and interpretation for educational supervisors, principals and examination supervisors to support the im-

plementation of the National Assessment Programme and also training teachers in the use of diagnostic tests and in remedial teaching techniques (para 29)

(8) improving the teaching competence of primary teachers in mathematics, English and science through further academic studies in these content areas (paras 32, 33)

(9) providing training in educational planning, supervision and programme evaluation to support the implementation of the decentralisation policy through Regional Education Offices (para 36)

(10) developing the skills of supervisory officers and school principals in the evaluation of teacher performance and curriculum implementation (para 37)

(11) providing training in distance education techniques for the staff of the proposed Department of In-Service Training and resource teachers for Teacher Centres and the schools (para 42, 43)

(12) providing training for ministry personnel in the management of information and the use of computer-assisted instruction (para 28)

The twelve categories of training needs are not mutually exclusive. There is overlap in a number of areas and training programmes should be designed to accomplish multiple objectives in order to economise on time and resources. All of these training needs, however, can be met by a combination of conventional and distance education techniques through the infrastructure which is taking shape in the Jamaican educational system.

53 As a first step, the training needs identified above should be confirmed through further in-depth consultations and, if confirmed, refined and quantified as the basis of a planned, comprehensive training programme to be operationalised as soon as possible and in concert with the Human Resources Development Programme. The Commonwealth of Learning could be of most assistance in helping to plan, monitor, and provide technical assistance to the distance education component of the training programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

54 Arising from the findings of the present consultancy, the Consultant makes the following recommendations for the consideration of the Government of Jamaica:

1. That a Council on Distance Education (CODE) be established under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and include representatives from the MOE, the Jamaica Teachers Association, the Joint Board of Teacher Education, the University of the West Indies (UWIDITE), the Creative Production and Technical Centre (CPTC), the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, the Council of Teachers Colleges, the Council of Community Colleges, and the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST). The Council would oversee the development of a comprehensive plan to meet the human resources need in the Education Sector through open learning and distance education.

2. That the CODE plan be part of the Government's Five Year Development Plan 1990-95;

3. That a Unit on Human Resources Development be established in the Ministry of Education to implement the plan and coordinate the activities including all in-service teacher training programmes;

4. That Learning (or Teacher) Centres be created throughout the country under the overall supervision of the Unit on Human Resources Development but through the direct instrumentality of the Regional Education Offices;

5. That provision be made in the CODE plan to meet the training needs identified in para 52 of the consultancy report;

6. That The Commonwealth of Learning assist the head of the Unit on Human Resources Development in the preparation, management and evaluation of the comprehensive training plan for a minimum of three years;

7. That The Commonwealth of Learning assist in a training scheme for distance educators in Jamaica leading to a diploma and/or a Master's degree in distance education; and

8. That The Commonwealth of Learning assist in the acquisition and/or development of appropriate training courses and course material (print and non-print) to meet the training needs referenced in para 52 of this consultancy report.

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CONSULTANT'S SCHEDULE

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sept 10	Arrived in Kingston	Mr. Euclid King, Chief Education Officer
Sept. 11 a.m.	Ministry of Eduction	Mr. Euclid King, Chief Education Officer
11 p.m.	Ministry of Education	Hon. B. Whiteman, Minister of State
Sept. 12 a.m.	Planning Unit, Caenwood	Mrs. V. Been, ACEO, Planning
12 p.m.	Planning Unit, Caenwood	Mrs. V. Been, ACEO, Planning
Sept. 13 a.m.	Ministry of Education	Dr. D. Graham, ACEO, Tertiary
13 p.m.	Ministry of Education	Mr. F. Taylor, ACEO, Secondary
Sept. 14 a.m.	Ministry of Education	Ms. P. Patterson, Director of Projects
14 p.m.	Ministry of Education	Mr. K. Lorenzo, Assist. to CEO
Sept. 15 a.m.	University of the West Indies	Dr. G.C. Lalor, Pro Vice-Chancellor
15 p.m.	University of the West Indies	Ms. C. Marrett, UWIDITE Ms. V. McLaren, UWIDITE
Sept. 18 a.m.	Ministry of Education	Mr. King and Staff
18 p.m.	Ministry of Education	Mr. W. Barrett, ACEO, Primary

Sept. 19 a.m.	UNDP Headquarters	Mr. H. Cholmondelby, Representative
19 p.m.	Planning Unit, Caenwood	Hon. B. Whiteman, Minister of State & Council of Community College Heads Mrs. B. Lawrence, Project Director
Sept. 20 a.m.	Conference Centre	Official Opening of Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting
20 p.m.	Planning Unit, Caenwood	Mrs. B. Lawrence, Project Officer
Sept. 21 a.m.	UNESCO Regional Office	Mr. Simon Clark, Representative Dr. E. London University Council of Jamaica
21 p.m.	Ministry of Education	Mrs. Lola Williams, ACEO, Curriculum
Sept. 22 a.m.	Church Teachers College,	Principals and Staff Members
22 p.m.	Bethlehem Teachers College Munro College, Hampton College	
Sept 23 a.m.	Departed from Kingston	Mr. Euclid King

November 7, 1989